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➤EDITORIAL NOTES.◀

The Opposition to Old Testament Study in the Sunday School.—There are many who would give up entirely the study of the Old Testament in the Sunday School. The number is larger than is generally supposed. It includes men of all denominations and of every position. No one ought to be surprised that this question has come up. No one ought to suppose that it will be settled soon or easily. The real occasion of surprise is that attention has not been called to it sooner. The question, whether the Old Testament ought to be given up entirely in Sunday School study, or whether it ought to receive less attention than it has been accustomed to receive is practically the same. For (1) the reasons which would take away from Old Testament study one-half or one-fourth of the time now being given to it, will later be urged in favor of giving up the study of it altogether; and (2) the same thing is effected by either course, viz., a disparagement of Old Testament study; while (3) since, considering its dimensions, the Old Testament is now receiving only one-fifth the attention given to the New (see p. 306 of this number), any diminution of this amount will be really an abandonment of the study. Bible students are entering upon the discussion of a most vital question. If one will but stop to consider all that is here involved he will realize that what have hitherto been regarded as fundamentals are at stake.

Our Symposium.—There is great advantage in approaching a question from many standpoints. To discuss a topic from a single point of view is, of course, to present a narrow, one-sided discussion. And this is true whether the treatment is that of a specialist or of an ignoramus.

There is great advantage also in considering, side by side, the ideas of different men in reference to a given subject, since each man, of necessity, speaks from a different point of view. So far as there may be agreement, well and good; where disagreement is found, there is probably a reason why we should stop and think.

We give our readers, this month, the opinions, briefly stated, of several of our most eminent teachers and preachers, touching the use of the Old Testament in the Sunday School. They do not all consider the same aspect of this question, yet all take up the question. Is there entire agreement in the various positions taken? No. Yet the differences are not marked ones.

There is food, here, for thought. The question is a vital one. If it is a mistake to give so much of the time in Sunday School study to the Old Testament, the mistake has gone uncorrected long enough. If it is *not* a mistake, the sooner this strong under-current of opposition to its use is controlled, the better will it be for the cause of Sunday School instruction and Bible study.

Summer Instruction.—In this country, we go from one extreme to another. "Nothing or everything" is the regulating principle. Five years ago, there

existed very few Schools for summer instruction, principally those of Dr. Sauvour at Amherst, Mass., and of Dr. Vincent at Chautauqua, N. Y. At that time, the opinion prevailed that no really thorough work *was* done in Summer Schools, and the supposition was that no really thorough work *could* be done in such Schools. Schools have increased, and opinions have changed. In every State, almost in every county, a Summer School is held. They are like the sand of the seashore for multitude. Whether this multiplication will continue, or whether there will come a reaction of feeling, and, consequently, a diminishing of the number, is difficult to predict. We incline, however, to the latter view. To a certain extent, the Summer School mania is ephemeral. It will have its sweep, and will pass away. Those Schools in which scientific work is not done, cannot long continue; and there is reason to suppose that there are many such. Those Schools which must depend upon the tuition-fees received for instruction, cannot long continue; and in this category must be included nineteen out of twenty. Those Schools which depend upon the popularity of a certain teacher or class of teachers must, of necessity, die away. Will any remain? Only those which, at the same time, do scientific work, are independent of the tuition-fees, and are backed by a constituency able to carry them through successfully, without reference to the popularity of any one person or class of persons.

But what has all this to do with the Old Testament?

The Summer Schools of Hebrew.—Three points deserve consideration:

1) The past history of an undertaking furnishes a basis from which to judge of its future. If THE INSTITUTE OF HEBREW, of which these Schools are a part, has one thing upon which it may congratulate itself more than another, it is the fact that no word impugning the character of the work done in its Schools, has ever been uttered. It has been the aim in these Schools, not to cover ground, but to do thorough, scholarly, critical work. Nor has any man, whether a participant in the work, or a spectator of it, found anything in this line to criticize.

2) If the Schools of Hebrew had depended for their existence on the receipts for tuition-fees, they would have failed. As a matter of fact they *have*, in every instance, *failed*,—financially. If, for every School, it were henceforth necessary to raise funds, one might well doubt whether many Schools would be held. But what are the facts? A sum of money has been secured, sufficient, with what may be reasonably expected from tuition-fees, to carry these Schools for *five* years. During this period, at least, the Schools may be said to be independent of tuition-fees. If there are men who desire to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by the Schools, but are really unable to pay the tuition-fee, the expenses of travelling, boarding, and the cost of books being so great, they will be most gladly admitted without the payment of the fee. Since these Schools are not dependent upon the money received from tuition-fees, there will be no necessity either of using illegitimate means for drawing students, or of retaining those who have come, but who are incapable of being profited by the work. In other words, with such a financial basis, the thoroughness of work, and not the number of the students, will be the thing held in mind. That after five years the work will be cared for financially in even a better way than during those five years, there is no good reason to doubt.